

## August 8

Genesis 36:1-8

Acts 18:24-28

Psalms 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b

Esau's household moves

A new disciple preaches

Remembering Joseph

Jesus founded a community of disciples which we now call the church so that people's lives would be touched, healed, and transformed by the power and grace of God. Jesus helped people learn to share their journeys with each other, spur each other on, and love each other as God loves them. He guided people to become mature, deeply committed disciples eager to serve their God.

Small groups are often where this kind of growth take place. That is why Emmanuel Congregational UCC in Watertown, NY places a high value on small groups and classes that are open-ended, welcoming, emotionally safe, conversational, and encourage and values the participation and comments of each participant.

Emmanuel UCC has a very active year-round schedule of small groups and classes, such as a Workplace Christianity Breakfast Group, Diversity Group, and Prayer Shawl Ministry. To find out more about these and other small groups and classes that Emmanuel UCC has to offer visit their website at [www.emmanuelucc.org/activities.htm](http://www.emmanuelucc.org/activities.htm).

### PRAYER:

*Through the storms of life, O God, you are with your people in the person of Jesus your Son. Calm our fears and strengthen our faith that we may never doubt his presence among us but proclaim that he is your Son, risen from the dead, living for ever and ever. Amen.*

## August 9

Genesis 37:5-11

Matthew 16:1-4

Psalms 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b

Joseph dreams of greatness

The sign of Jonah

Remembering Joseph

Since Kay Riley and Randall Parkin started the Shawl Knitting Ministry at Plymouth UCC in Des Moines, IA in 2004, members of Plymouth have knit and blessed more than 250 shawls for any person who is in need of a comforting shawl. The shawls have been blessed for joyful and painful reasons, and it is our prayer that these mantles have wrapped the recipients with warmth, prayers, thoughts, comfort and blessings. Shawls have been given to members, friends and relatives of members, and friends of people who hear of this ministry and ask for a shawl. We who knit these shawls feel so blessed to be able to participate in this necessary and helpful outreach. To learn more about this important ministry please visit the Plymouth UCC Web site at [www.plymouthchurch.com](http://www.plymouthchurch.com).

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## SUNDAY, AUGUST 3

T W E L F T H S U N D A Y A F T E R P E N T E C O S T



## Table of Plenty

Genesis 32:22-31

Psalms 17:1-7, 15

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:13-21

Jacob receives God's blessing

I shall see your face

The glory of God's people in Israel

Jesus feeds 5000

In 2007, more than 25 members and friends of Rockville United Church of Christ (RUC) in Rockville, MD gathered at a home selected by the Rebuilding Together

Program to work our magic. Rebuilding Together Montgomery County is a volunteer organization that works in partnership with the community to address the needs of low-income homeowners, primarily the elderly, disabled, and families with children.

This is the fourth house RUC has worked on and we're getting pretty good at it! One group built a ramp for the elderly resident so that she could use her walker to get in and out of the house more easily. Another crew painted the living room and bathroom. Our two bath experts made the bathroom handicapped accessible. And a fourth crew cleaned up the yard, ran errands (there are never quite the right supplies on any home improvement project!) and even had some time to plant flowers. We were joined by several of the resident's neighbors as well as some of her family members.

Our RUC team ranged in age from 20s to 70-plus and we worked from 8 a.m. to about 4 p.m. These are great days of fellowship—lots of laughter, some new skills learned and always the chance to get to know each other better—and meet new people in the community.

### PRAYER:

*God beyond all seeing and knowing, we meet you in the night of change and crisis, and wrestle with you in the darkness of doubt. Give us the will and spirit to live faithfully and love as we are loved. Amen.*

## August 4

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Genesis 31:22-42  
Romans 1:8-15  
Psalm 17:7-11,15

Laban overtakes Jacob  
A harvest among the Gentiles  
I shall see your face

“You feed them,” Jesus told the disciples, referring to the 5,000 who had gathered to hear him preach. This was also his call for each of us to take care of one another. Three UCC churches in the Illinois South Conference are doing just that through a Foods Resource Bank (FRB) growing project. Holy Ghost UCC in Damstadt, Trinity UCC in Biddleborn, and St. Paul UCC in Belleville have partnered for three years to raise corn and soybean crops, with the profits going to help those who are hungry in the developing world. In 2006, these churches contributed more than \$9,600 to help people in Uganda. In 2004 and 2005 they raised over \$16,000 to benefit people in Honduras and Serbia. Plans are to plant 20 acres in 2007.

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## August 5

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Genesis 32:3-21  
Acts 2:37-47  
Psalm 17:7-11, 15

Jacob sends gifts to Esau  
The believers breaking bread  
I shall see your face

In Colombia, leaders who speak out for human rights are threatened or worse, but Bishop Nel Beltran of Sincelejo in Colombia says that they persevere because they live in “kairos” time – God’s time, a moment of salvation. The Bishop is part of an ecumenical alliance, the Network for Development and Peace Foundation, which works within religious communities on the north coast of Colombia. On a visit to the U.S. last year, members of the alliance compared their work to improve agricultural development and education to the story of the loaves and fishes. Just as Jesus fed the multitude, so their work is multiplied through faith. To contribute to peace work in Colombia, visit [www.ucc.org/globalministries](http://www.ucc.org/globalministries).

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### PRAYER :

*God beyond all seeing and knowing, we meet you in the night of change and crisis, and wrestle with you in the darkness of doubt. Give us the will and spirit to live faithfully and love as we are loved. Amen.*

## August 6

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Isaiah 43:1-7  
Matthew 15:32-39  
Psalm 17:7-11, 15

God's blessing prevails  
Jesus feeds 5000  
I shall see your face

The First Congregational Church Board of Missions in Houston, TX is responsible for the work of the church beyond the congregation. It appraises entities in the course of the year, and informs and challenges the congregation to support these missions. Many on the Board serve in leadership positions on the boards of the chosen missions and some members have even started significant groups. FCC has from its beginning been a mission-minded people and strives to live out its faith by following Christ's teaching to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

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### PRAYER :

*God beyond all seeing and knowing, we meet you in the night of change and crisis, and wrestle with you in the darkness of doubt. Give us the will and spirit to live faithfully and love as we are loved. Amen.*

## August 7

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Genesis 35:22b-29  
Acts 17:10-15  
Psalm 105:1-6,16-22, 45b

The twelve sons of Jacob  
The good news is shared  
Remembering Joseph

The Apostle Andrew played no small role in the miracle of feeding the five thousand, says the Rev. Sandra Gourdet, former Global Ministries' missionary to Haiti. So it was no coincidence that the name Andrew Theological Seminary was chosen for an institution that transforms despair and poverty into hope and prosperity. The seminary, under the auspices of the National Spiritual Council of Haitian churches, has been planting seeds in the minds of a few pastors who have then nurtured and transformed the lives of thousands. The Rev. Gourdet holds Andrew Seminary up as a living symbol of how the five thousand can still be fed today.

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